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ABSTRACT

This handbook consists of an overview of planning along with identification of the logical steps or operations in the planning process. Each aspect of planning considered here--situation analysis, beliefs, mission, continuing objectives, assessment of continuing objectives, specific objectives (instructional), priorities, strategies (instructional), support services plans, budget, evaluation, and implementation--is defined and accompanied by an explanation. Characteristics peculiar to each step are described and alternative strategies by which the step might be implemented are suggested. Strategies suggested here are based on experiences shared by local personnel currently engaged in the planning process. (Author/IRT)

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Handbook for Planning in Local School Systems

DIVISION OF PLANNING • NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Handbook for Planning in Local School Systems

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FOREWORD

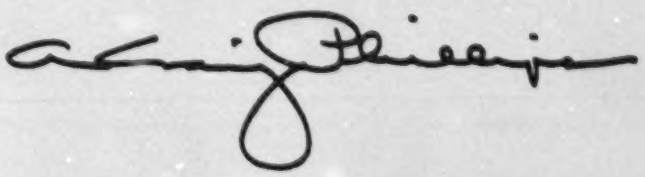
The State Department of Public Instruction is committed to the concept of comprehensive planning in local education systems as fundamental to the improvement of the teaching-learning process.

Planning, as an approach for more productive schools, has been with us for many years; and frequently it has been comprehensive, cooperative, and effective. Too often, however, planning has been spasmodic, piecemeal, and uncoordinated.

Currently there is growing evidence throughout the State that comprehensive educational planning at the local level is paying off. The very nature of planning involves frequent examination of "where we are, where we want to go, and how we are going to get there." It is not surprising, then, that personal growth and educational progress take place when such an approach, continuing in nature, is taken toward improving local education systems.

This edition of the "Handbook for Planning in Local Education Systems," in reality, is a composite testimony of the implementation of comprehensive planning in many school systems throughout North Carolina, with emphasis on the involvement of numerous individuals in various aspects of the planning process.

The Handbook is designed to assist in the overall improvement of planning in those local systems which already have initiated the process, and to assist local leadership personnel in other systems in the development and execution of programs of comprehensive planning suitable for their system.



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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of comprehensive educational planning as a viable approach for improving the teaching-learning process has revitalized education in a number of local education systems in North Carolina and the nation. This Handbook, in recording many experiences in planning in more than 90 North Carolina education systems and in synthesizing certain national trends, should afford guidance to those who are interested in improving the quality of education at the local level. As the planning process is further refined and as worthwhile experiences come to light, periodic papers will be issued to supplement this Handbook.

The Handbook consists of an overview of planning along with identification of the logical steps or operations in the planning process. Each step of the planning process is defined and accompanied by an explanation. Characteristics peculiar to each step are described and alternative strategies by which the step might be implemented are suggested. Though planning is a cyclical process, the completion of one step does not imply finality or even permanence. As the outcomes of each step are reviewed, and modified when appropriate, recycling of the steps in the planning process will tend to become normal procedure. Strategies suggested in the Handbook are based on experiences shared by local personnel currently engaged in the planning process. It will be noted that, in some instances, one strategy will be adequate to implement the step; in others, a combination of strategies will be needed. In still other instances, modification of strategies currently employed or new strategies will be required to implement steps of the planning process. In each situation the education system must take into consideration its own unique conditions and requirements.

Comprehensive educational planning provides the opportunity to incorporate in a systematic manner new educational concepts and practices into the education enterprise. In addition, planning assists in providing for the demands and expectations of the various publics concerned with education. It is our belief that as education personnel become more proficient in comprehensive planning its benefits will tend to guarantee a type of education which has personal meaning for each student.

Comprehensive Planning in Education: An Overview

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

Comprehensive planning in education rapidly is achieving prestige as a major approach for improving the teaching-learning process. Although planning has been a part of public education in the past, much of it has been somewhat isolated since it has been done in specifically required program areas. Recent emphasis and developments in planning, however, have tended to encompass all operations within an educational system. This concept of comprehensive planning embraces an awareness of all aspects of the school program, their inter-relationships, as well as the needs for coordination of activities in order that the common goals and specific objectives of the total school program might be realized.

As the need for expanded programs and services arises, the complexity of the educational organization increases. It becomes increasingly necessary, therefore, that the decision-making processes of the local educational system be capable of providing for the changing and growing needs of the population. As a result improvement of existing programs and services in the education system demands more and more decisions at the local level in areas such as organization, staffing, communication, coordination, monitoring, budgeting, and evaluation. Comprehensive planning is the one activity which seems to afford greatest promise for bringing a semblance of unity and coordination to the total education program, since this type of overall planning, through its systematic and logical approach to decision-making, emphasizes effectiveness as opposed to decisions based on intuition and experience.

Planning in this publication and in its application in local education systems is defined as follows:

> Planning is the rational determination of where the education system is, where it wants to go, and how it will get there. It is a process through which objectives are established and resources are allocated to optimize the attainment of those objectives on a predetermined schedule.

Planning requires that the education systems analyze its current situation and determine how well it is doing what it was organized to do. Planning also requires that the education system specify where it wants to go and what objectives it wishes to accomplish at a future point in time. In addition, planning requires that the education system determine how best it can attain those pre-determined objectives. This determination will involve the identification of alternative strategies/programs and the selection of the most effective strategies for achieving the objectives. Awareness of the current situation and commitment to agreed-upon objectives and strategies become the basis upon which decisions then will be made. A comprehensive approach to planning involves all levels of the organization and has possibilities of assisting all personnel of the educational organization in making more rational and effective decisions.

Benefits of Planning

It should be emphasized that the implementation of comprehensive planning in an education system will require manpower and time. Potential benefits resulting from this investment in comprehensive planning include the following:

- Planning is a means for improving the quality of education offered by the education system. Improvement assumes change. Planning makes possible better decisions regarding all facets of proposed or required changes.
- Planning enables the school system to focus upon the purposes of the education system and the objectives it is striving to achieve — clearly and concisely as well as internally and externally. Resource allocations can be made, justified, and communicated on the basis of objectives which are expressed in terms of learning outcomes for pupils.
- Planning justifies the continuing reexamination by the education system of its mission and its objectives in light of the expectations and desires of the community it serves. This reexamination facilitates organizational renewal, whereby the educational organization may remain a viable and dynamic vehicle for accommodating the changing educational needs and desires of the community.
- Planning provides the opportunity for involvement of many people. The planning process provides an appropriate vehicle whereby individuals may have input into the complex operations of the education system.
- Planning has possibilities for improving internal communications and understanding as interaction takes place horizontally and vertically. As planning activities are conducted through work

groups and committees, decision-making processes are often clarified or even altered.

- Planning encourages a system of education in which each segment is encouraged to work with all other segments towards the achievement of common goals. Recognition of the importance of what each component might contribute to the total education system frequently is the major by-product of comprehensive planning.
- Planning can be the means for diverting decision-making processes to those levels of the organization at which information is available and at which decisions are to be implemented. Such dispersal of decision-making powers and such delegation of responsibility and authority to personnel at various levels of the organization can be a genuine basis for strengthening individuals and, in turn, the total educational system.

Principles for Successful Implementation of Comprehensive Planning

PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The following assumptions, beliefs, and principles are worthy of consideration by any education system which is seriously considering the implementation of comprehensive planning.

1. **Planning is future-oriented.**

   Planning identifies alternatives for appropriate decisions and actions to be undertaken in the future. Past experiences serve only as an information base upon which more effective decisions can be made. Through the planning process goals, objectives, and alternative strategies to which the education system is committed are identified for future implementation.

2. **Planning considers alternative futures.**

   Planning is a process through which an education system can guide and control, through intervention, future events. The "alternative futures" concept implies that education systems, through the planning process, can identify alternative futures and appropriate action for what it wants to be in the future. The concept of "alternative futures," along with required action, can serve as the basis for organizational decision-making which will bring the desired future to reality.

3. **Planning is a prerequisite to change.**

   Effective change in the school system must be preceeded by planning; and, to be successful, such planning must involve school and community personnel and must be consistent with the values, mores, and expectations of the community. As a continuing process — with input from a variety of individuals, with effective coordination and inter-relationships between and among the components of the total system, and with decision-making powers appropriately dispersed — planning makes possible the introduction of educational changes with understanding, acceptance, and even enthusiasm.

4. **Planning permeates all levels of the education system.**

   Effective comprehensive planning must provide for the involvement of individuals at all levels of the organization. When planning is an isolated process, the successful implementation of the plans is highly improbable. The most effective approach to system-wide comprehensive planning is one in which planning becomes a cooperative organizational behavior at all levels of the education system, each component of the system working with all other components. The development, implementation, and maintenance of a unified approach to comprehensive planning can be achieved through centralized leadership responsible for facilitating and coordinating the planning efforts of each sub-system. In this way, fragmentation will be minimized and the total program will be emphasized.

5. **Planning actively seeks the involvement of individuals, within and without the education system.**

   The planning process provides a vehicle whereby individuals can meaningfully provide input into the complex decisions of the education system. Involvement is essential to a dynamic type of education and must, of necessity, be structured if it is to be effective and have a purposeful influence upon the education system. Planning, through appropriately designed internal and external communication linkages, provides for the involvement of the appropriate individuals at the appropriate place and time. It encourages input on a systematic basis.

6. **Planning is goal oriented.**

   The purpose of comprehensive planning is to identify the goals which the education system would like to achieve. In order to accomplish specific goals, it is necessary that the education system identifies alternative strategies/programs and selects, develops, and implements those strategies which will best achieve agreed-upon goals. Planning is a systematic and rational approach by which goals are developed, by which alternative strategies are identified and selected, by which support service requirements are formulated, and for which evaluation procedures for measuring progress are determined. Such a systematic and logical approach to

planning makes its implementation and the monitoring thereof a reasonable responsibility for any local education system genuinely interested in improving the quality of the teaching-learning process.

7. **Planning is an integral part of the total and ongoing administration and operation of the education system.**

   Comprehensive planning must be recognized as a major and legitimate function and as an ongoing obligation of the education system. It should not be regarded as a part-time activity, an after-thought, or as a panacea in times of crisis. Planning must be viewed and embraced by education leadership as a primary administrative and leadership behavior of all administrators and as a tool for effectively guiding and administering the school system toward achievement of its objectives and goals.

8. **Planning must have the commitment of the board of education and the leadership personnel within the community in order to become operational in the local education system.**

   The successful implementation of comprehensive planning in the local education system requires the commitment of the board of education as well as the leadership personnel within the system. When comprehensive planning is a major expectation of personnel in the system, it is likely that it will be successfully implemented. The commitment to comprehensive planning requires more than lip service; it must be supported by human and fiscal resources and accepted as a major priority. The positive support of planning must be followed with a continual feedback and monitoring process to determine how well planning implementation is progressing in the education system.

9. **Planning requires time for implementation.**

   Much time is required before planning is so internalized that it is regarded as a natural organizational behavior. Planning must be learned; people must internalize the processes; planning structures must be devised or restructured; communication and interaction linkages must be opened or reestablished; and relationships between people and sub-systems must be operational. The cooperative approaches employed in planning require considerable time if comprehensive planning is to be successfully and effectively implemented.

10. **Planning functions most effectively when education leadership participates in the process.**

    The implementation of planning is achieved most successfully when the educational leadership within the local system is willing to accept a cooperative and participatory approach to administration. An administrator responsible for implementing planning, independently, can no longer function successfully. Instead, a leadership pattern should be encouraged which will foster a cooperative and deliberative approach toward decision-making, an approach through which decisions are mutually agreed upon by the personnel who will implement the decisions. A participatory leadership style will disperse decision-making, thereby decentralizing authority and responsibility to the operational level, where information is available for making and implementing decisions. The decentralization of decision-making affords genuine opportunities for the sharing of information, the clarification of the decision-making processes itself, and a greater understanding of how the education system functions.

11. **Successful implementation of comprehensive planning can best be accomplished through an individual to whom planning coordination responsibilities have been specifically delegated.**

    The implementation of comprehensive planning in an education system requires a systematic and cooperative effort. This unified and coordinated effort toward implementing planning requires organizing, scheduling, and coordinating the activities of many individuals, within and without the education system. This can best be accomplished through the efforts of an individual specifically designated as the planning coordinator, whose primary responsibility is that of coordinating all planning activities within the education system.

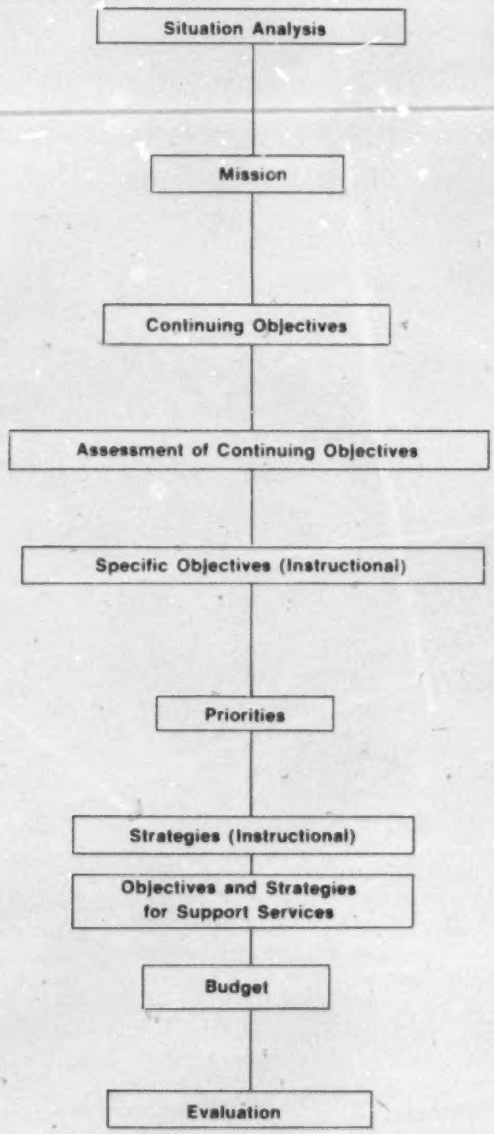
    The designation of a planning coordinator can be done in one of two ways: (1) by creating a new position on the central staff with full-time responsibility for coordinating all planning activities in the system; (2) by redirecting the responsibilities of a current staff member, perhaps that staff member who is currently responsible for instruction, though not necessarily so, since the major focus of comprehensive planning is directed toward the improvement of the teaching-learning process. Under the leadership of a planning coordinator, determination of educational objectives will then be accompanied by appropriate and adequate support services plans representing the total education system.

Planning: A Process

PLANNING: A PROCESS

Planning is a process through which the education system rationally determines where it is, where it wants to go, and how it will get there. It is a process through which objectives are established and through which resources are allocated to optimize the attainment of those objectives on a predetermined schedule.

Planning as a process involves a systematic and organized series of steps or operations concluding in a particular outcome or end — an educational plan. A description of each of these steps forms the central theme of this publication. In each description is a definition, an explanation, as well as selected alternative strategies which might be used by local education systems to accomplish the operation. The alternatives, it should be emphasized, are not all-inclusive but are open to modification and provide ideas relative to how local education systems might approach implementation.



Collection and analysis of data relevant to an understanding of the school administrative unit and the community served.

A broad and comprehensive statement of the central and continuing purpose of the education system which justifies its continuing support by society and which provides direction for the management and allocation of resources for its operation.

Qualitative statements which collectively describe the conditions that will exist on a continuing basis when the education system is accomplishing its mission.

A goal-by-goal analysis of the education system's current level of performance.

A statement of desired student achievement which identifies the learning results expected, the student group for whom the learning results are intended, the means of evaluation, the time of completion, and terminal evaluation.

Rank ordering of the continuing objectives in terms of importance or an indication of where the largest gaps exist between current and desired performance.

Means employed to accomplish the objectives.

Expression of goals, objectives, strategies, and responsibilities of a support area.

Financial expression of the education system's strategies for achieving its stated objectives.

A description of the detailed and systematic process for obtaining and analyzing meaningful data that produces information which indentifies the degree to which an education system is accomplishing its objectives.

Basically, the educational system is people-oriented in many ways but especially from the point of view that a vast preponderance of its fiscal resources are used to acquire the talents, skills, and services of personnel. To be affective, therefore, the educational system must organize and coordinate the efforts and activities of a myriad of highly trained personnel into an educational program/process designed to achieve the goals and objectives established by the education system. The organization and coordination of energy and effort in an educational system is not limited to any one particular facet of an education system's organization but is applicable to all operations that come under the jurisdiction of a local board of education. Whenever a task requires the efforts of more than one person or affects any other part of the system, there is a need for coordination and organization. No single aspect of an educational organization can function in isolation, since in some way it affects all other aspects of the organization, either directly or indirectly. The implementation of the planning process, of necessity, requires the organization and coordination of the efforts of all individuals within the educational system. And, for such implementation to be successful, some sort of planned structure should be devised which gives promise of a unified approach to all planning activities.

Planning Structure

PLANNING STRUCTURE

A structure for facilitating comprehensive planning in the education system should identify: (1) the levels at which the planning processes will be conducted; (2) the positions of people and/or groups which will be involved in the planning activities; (3) communications linkages through which planning outputs are communicated; and (4) a tentative time schedule for implementing comprehensive planning.

The specific structure identified in a local education system for facilitating the implementation of comprehensive planning should reflect the unique aspect of the particular education system. The following components of a "structured" approach toward the implementation of comprehensive planning, along with the responsibilities of the personnel concerned in each component, should be considered, since each of these likely would be a common element.

External Groups

Numerous groups compose the general public served by the local education system. This public is regarded as external to the education system in that it is not a part of the formal and professional educational structure; nonetheless, public involvement and input to the education system is essential if the system is to provide adequately and effectively for the needs and desires of students and the community it serves.

Many local school systems currently receive input from the public on a regular and continuing basis, primarily through advisory groups, some of which have been mandated by federal guidelines relative to specific programs. Advisory groups, functioning in a realistic and imaginative manner, have many possibilities through their input to improve operations of the total education system. The additional data is the genesis of an information system which will provide better information for decision-making. It is essential that data is systematically collected, organized, and analyzed in order to produce information on a timely basis for all levels of decision-makers. To insure availability of accurate and pertinent data, the data and information system must be updated and refined on a periodic schedule.

Board of Education

The board of education is the legally constituted body responsible for education within its jurisdiction, and in this capacity is privileged to play a key role in the implementation of comprehensive planning in the local education system. In particular, the board can assist in establishing and/or maintaining the communications linkage between the community and the education system. Moreover, the board can be helpful in soliciting community input into the planning process and by endorsing and supporting comprehensive planning within the system. To be official and to have the prestige for successful implementation, the comprehensive educational plan developed by the education system should be adopted by the school board.

Planning/Leadership Team

The creation of a planning/leadership team is a means by which the ideas of those in leadership positions might be synthesized. In addition, the planning/leadership team might serve as a communications link, both horizontally and vertically, between and within the operating units of the education system. Such a linkage would tend to promote a unified and coordinated effort by all the subsystems toward the common goals of the total system. In addition, a planning/leadership team might enhance and support a cooperative and collaborative approach toward decision-making and educational governance.

Practically, membership and size of the planning/leadership team should vary from one system to another. Ideally, however, there are several considerations to take into account when identifying the planning/leadership team. The superintendent, as the chief executive in the education system, should be a member of the team. Since the prime focus of the education system is teaching and learning, individuals in key program positions in the central office likewise should be members of the team. Since the primary operating unit of the education system is the individual school, it seems reasonable that each principal also should be a member of the planning/leadership team. Other members might include teachers, board members, and students. Such decisions, it is emphasized, should be made by the local school system after careful examination of the alternatives. Though the planning/leadership team provides leadership, direction, and overall coordination in the implementation of comprehensive planning, it might take on other governance functions as needed or desired. In a very real sense, therefore, the functions and structures of the planning/leadership team should evolve and definitely should be tailored to each school system.

Ad Hoc Committees

The implementation of comprehensive planning requires the efforts of people working together through a planning process. Committees working cooperatively constitutes a significant avenue by which activities and tasks required to implement planning are accomplished. Committees provide opportunities for organizational interaction and communication both internally and externally. It is essential that committee tasks be clearly identified and that committee membership be such that subsystems of the education system are represented and that skills and competencies required to accomplish the tasks are utilized.

Individual School

Individual schools have the major operational role in the achievement of the educational objectives of the education system; for this reason, each school needs a well-defined approach of its own for implementing comprehensive planning. One effective way for a school to develop its own approach, a component of the system's comprehensive plan, is the formulation of a planning/leadership team in each school. It is anticipated that the school team would work in each school similarily to the way in which the system planning/leadership team would work on a system-wide basis. Membership of the school team should include the principal, assistant principals, department heads/grade level leaders/team leaders, as well as media and guidance personnel. Membership composition, by all means, should be a decision made at the individual school level.

Planning Coordinator

The successful implementation of comprehensive planning is a local school system requires the coordination of many individuals involved in a variety of planning efforts and activities. A major means for achieving the coordination of the efforts of individuals toward a common outcome is through the identification of a planning coordinator. Responsibilities of the planning coordinator, in cooperation with other personnel in the system, include the identification and establishment of a planning structure, the development and upgrading of planning skills and competencies, the coordination of planning activities within the system, and the ensuring of opportunities for continuous planning in the system. Although a number of different individuals in the education system might be assigned responsibilities for planning coordination, it might possibly be carried out most appropriately by the person having responsibility for instruction. As previously cited, the rationale for this approach is that the main thrust of comprehensive planning is on the teaching-learning process. Since the coordination needed in comprehensive planning and the responsibility for instruction in the education system are somewhat similar, it seems reasonable to assume that centralization of these responsibilities in one position would often be advisable. Although there are other alternatives for coordinating planning activities, the above approach is one that can be implemented without additional cost to the education system.

Coordinating the Planning Process and Structure

COORDINATING THE PLANNING PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

With the determination of a planning process and a planning structure, the task now becomes one of correlating these elements into a unified planning operation. Approaches to this task will vary, depending upon the local education system; however, in all cases the implementation of planning must be an organized effort if it is to be effective, especially in its impact upon educational decision-making. The following description suggests one approach for correlating process and structure.

An examination of the planning process likely will indicate movement from broad generalizations to specifics, resembling in many ways the structure of an educational system. For example, the functions of the central administrative office of an educational system are related to the general directions in which the system is moving and provides the supporting services required by each of the system's subsystems. In many instances, specific and technical services are also provided to the various subsystems which form the total education structure. In addition to the general functions provided for the system as a whole, there are specific and technical aspects of the teaching-learning processes which are the responsibility of the various sub-systems of the total organization. These sub-systems include the individual schools, classrooms, and support services required for carrying out the mission of the education system. Viewing an educational system in this manner does not suggest that one level is of lesser importance than another; rather, it strongly implies that individual schools function in more specific and technical terms and that the processes of teaching-learning are identified and made operational at the school level. It must be remembered, however, that individual schools are interrelated and, together, constitute a system of education which functions through a central administrative office providing support services under one local board of education. Although each school functions somewhat independently, all schools are expected to work together toward the accomplishment of a common purpose.

The movement from generalities to specifics in the school system is also reflected in the decisions which are made in the system. Decisions in the central administrative office affect general aspects of the education system, whereas decisions at individual schools are specifically related to the techniques and processes involved in the area of teaching and learning. The skills and competencies for making specific decisions related to ways in which personnel, pupils, and education programs/strategies are organized and interrelated should, of course, be made in the individual schools, where the decisions are to be implemented.

In order to capitalize upon the existing organizational structure of the education system, the planning process should be structured so that particular operations can be accomplished at various levels within the organization. This approach demands that open lines of communication be maintained in order that all personnel will be aware of what is going on in the system's planning activities and will have access to information needed to generate planning outputs. In developing the planning process, the generalized and broad components of the plan should be developed with input from the entire system by personnel having broad responsibilities. Specific components of the plan for planning should be developed within the broad framework of the education system by persons nearest to the point of implementation and operations. On this basis, the SITUATION ANALYSIS, MISSION, and CONTINUING OBJECTIVES might best be generated by the planning/leadership team of the education system, with input and recommendations from external and internal sources to the system. These steps are developed most effectively with input and recommendations from external groups as well as from all personnel within the education system, never in isolation. Perhaps it should be noted that each person's input will not always appear verbatim in the final version of the plan, since this is a consensus of various groups and individuals.

The next steps of the planning process, the ASSESSMENT OF CONTINUING OBJECTIVES and the development of SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (INSTRUCTIONAL) are best accomplished by ad hoc committees, composed of teaching personnel representing individual schools and other specific resource personnel. It is possible for an ad hoc committee to be formed for each continuing objective. In such instances the ad hoc committee should be responsible for doing an assessment in the learning area addressed by the respective continuing objective. Based on such an assessment, specific objectives for the education system then might be developed by the ad hoc committee.

PRIORITIES relative to continuing objectives may be selected in a number of ways. Analyzed data should be used to assist in determining largest gaps between current and desired performance. It should be remembered that priorities indicate learning areas that will receive added emphasis in the future, not that *all* efforts will be devoted to priorities at the expense of limited effort in other areas.

Following agreement on this umbrella-type approach for coordinating the planning process and structure, a major shift in emphasis on planning efforts must move from the system to the individual school, wherein each school develops its part of the comprehensive plan for the total educational system. As indicated earlier, the identification of a planning/leadership team in each school will assist in planning at the school level and will promote a participatory and cooperative approach to decision-making. At this point, each school should analyze the identified specific objectives and should adjust the objectives to meet the particular needs of the school. After completion of this task, the individual school should then proceed to identify, select, develop, and implement the STRATEGIES or programs it plans to use for achieving its objectives. This step provides maximum opportunity for creativity, since it enables teaching personnel to become involved in program identification, selection, and implementation. Strategies, it should be recalled, are those ways in which a school organizes its staff, pupils, materials, supplies, and equipment so that productive learning takes place. Though there are many alternatives, the most important factor is to identify from alternatives the best strategy for accomplishing the objectives. Since numerous variations characterize each school, strategies will be different from one school to another.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES and STRATEGIES for SUPPORT SERVICES are developed by support services personnel, with emphasis on making available those services which are needed for implementing the strategies/programs in the schools.

BUDGETS are direct outgrowths of strategies, since strategies identify requirements for personnel, materials, supplies, and equipment. Budgets, developed school-by-school, later become part of the total budget for operating the entire school system. Realizing that budget-making is an involved process, initial efforts will need constant refinement as a program-budgeting system is anticipated.

The EVALUATION step is concerned with the formulation of an evaluation program for determining the success or progress of the education system in achieving its objectives. Evaluation is envisioned as a means for determining the performance of the entire education system and for identifying problems which might exist in the learning processes, not as a means of appraising personnel. The highlighting of learning strategies/processes/programs which are not effective might then be analyzed as a basis for determining specific problems. This analysis might lead to productive approaches for improving the education system. It is likely that such action will include the development of new strategies, modification of existing strategies through inservice training, utilization of new learning materials, new approaches in the utilization of personnel, internal and external, and the like.

Although the coordination of process and structure described above is simplified, it does provide one approach which can be further developed and refined by users in the local education system.

With this as a background, the next sections of the Handbook detail the specific steps of the planning process.

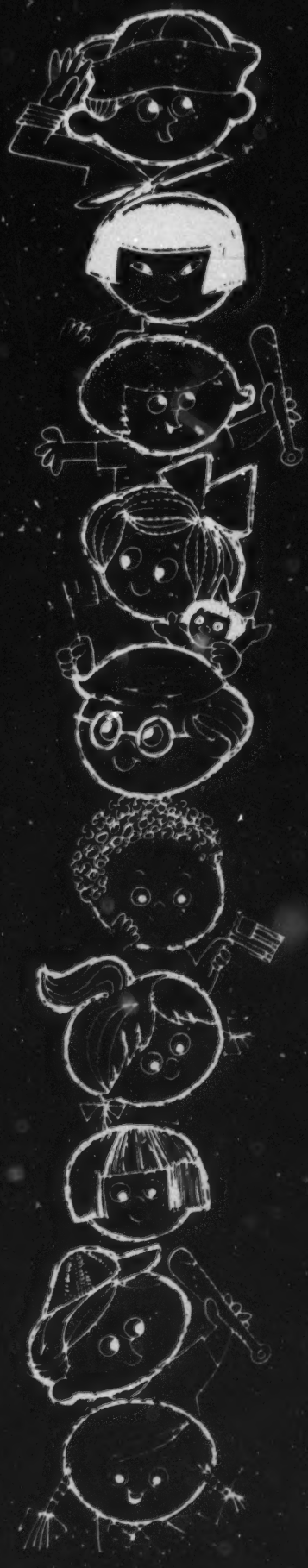
Planning Implementation

PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

As previously mentioned, the implementation of comprehensive planning requires the coordinated efforts of many individuals, internal and external to the education system. A discussion was provided concerning the planning process, the planning structure, and the correlation of the two in implementing comprehensive planning. The role of a planning coordinator in the local education system was also described. When these elements are operational, a local education system is then ready to implement comprehensive planning, which should culminate in the development of an improved comprehensive educational program for the system.

Experience has shown that local education systems often derive greater benefits from their planning efforts when the services of a qualified external planning consultant are obtained. Usually an external planning consultant is able to bring objectivity to the system, a situation which otherwise might not occur. In conducting planning sessions for personnel in the system, the planning consultant brings expertise and competence in the skills of planning, which, in turn, are taught to personnel in the system. In addition, the external consultant is able to ask and pursue pertinent questions, an exercise which might not seem appropriate for personnel who are part of the system. Assignments, tasks, and activities can be identified through the leadership of the external planning consultant — based on experiences with other local education systems in the State. To promote an indepth and objective examination of the operations and performance of the local education system and to implement comprehensive planning as effectively as possible, it is strongly suggested that an external planning consultant be utilized by the local education system as it considers its initial planning cycle. As personnel become more comfortable and competent in using planning skills, and as the beneficial results of planning are appreciated, the local education system likely will adopt comprehensive planning as a way of life for its ongoing operations.

Steps of the Planning Process



STEPS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Situation Analysis

Definition

Situation analysis is the collection and analysis of data relevant to an understanding of the school administrative unit and the community served.

Explanation

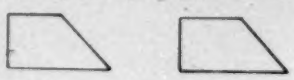
Data is the raw material for use in each operation in the planning process. But data, by itself, is relatively value-free and meaningless. Analysis of data as used here, is the process of applying values and meaning to data in order to produce information that can be used in making decisions and in operating the education system.

The placement of situation analysis as one of the first components in a planning process is quite appropriate, since this suggests strongly that data and subsequent analysis is needed very early if the results of the planning efforts are to be useful. Placement of situation analysis as one of the first components in a planning process is inappropriate if this suggests that all information needs are satisfied by collecting and analyzing data only once in the process. Indeed, as the planning/leadership team and other personnel pursue comprehensive planning, it is very likely that additional information needs will surface. It is apparent then that situation analysis should be an ongoing component of the planning process and that eventually this approach should evolve into an information system which will meet the needs of the total education system.

The description of situation analysis given above might be illustrated in the following way. Imagine that you have been given the following instructions:

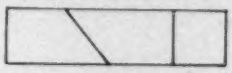
> You will be given pieces of cardboard which are irregularly shaped and you are asked to piece them together in a configuration which is "easiest" to describe to someone unable to see what you have done.

Now imagine that the first two pieces you are given are shaped thusly:



You might arrange them in this way:

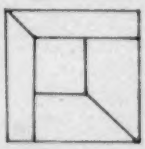
You are given a third piece which you arranged as shown:



Now, you are given two new, additional pieces:

As you try to arrange them, it will be impossible to arrange them into a configuration that is "easy" to describe.

What you needed to do at the last stage was pick up the first three pieces and go at it again — to get:



As new pieces became available it was necessary to consider the possibility of rearranging the old pieces so that, together, they might fit properly. The analogy to collecting and analyzing "pieces" of data relevant to the planning process seems apparent.

Information (data plus analysis) is needed early in the process and should include data relative to the community, student data, instructional program descriptions, staff data, finance data, and facility data.

A suggested guide for this preliminary collection of data is presented at the end of this section. It should always be remembered that data and information needs will change frequently to meet new demands from the education system. As new data are analyzed and entered into the information system, constant rearrangement of data will be necessary in order that all pieces fit together.

The term "data" itself must assume a broader meaning that it might have had in the past. Data is more than automated outputs, such as test scores; data should have a more global application, including any items which can be used for making effective decisions. In this sense, recommendations from advisory groups might be considered as data; results of surveys and opinionnaires is data; and community mores is data. The beliefs which guide an educational system is data and is also important, especially in the way in which the system approaches the total learning processes. All data are important; however, the generation of beliefs and their acceptance by the educational system is a means for developing a common perspective and a cooperative approach toward teaching and learning by all personnel in the system.

Beliefs

Definition

Beliefs are statements of principle or philosophy about education which are widely accepted by personnel within the education system and which guide the behavior of the personnel in the system.

Explanation

Behavior is ultimately determined by a complex mixture of beliefs, environmental factors, and goals. To maximize the probability that planning will be effective, it is imperative that the beginning point, the philosophic foundation for the goals of the organization, be clearly delineated. The process of developing beliefs will help focus the attention of the group on differences in value systems existing within the group and will tend to strengthen widely accepted beliefs of team members. If objectives or strategies are adopted which are not consistent with the beliefs of the majority of the members of the group, it is highly unlikely those objectives or strategies will be carried through to completion.

It is important to keep in mind that the beliefs are organizational beliefs and not necessarily individual beliefs. Team members need not agree on all organizational beliefs, but it is important that their behavior is guided by the organizational beliefs.

An important secondary benefit resulting from the consideration of beliefs is its potential effect on developing a strong productive team. Members of the team have an opportunity to learn about the beliefs and value systems of other team members. This enables the team to develop a method of participation and decision-making in harmony with the value systems of the group. If the team is to be effective, it is imperative that team members have the opportunity to develop a common understanding of the basic attitudes which affect organizational attitudes.

Characteristics

- Belief statements most frequently are subjective in nature and not easily evaluated by traditional methods.
- Belief statements are similar to codes of ethics common in many professions.
- Belief statements reflect the collective view of the education system and are stated as the beliefs of the organization.
- Belief statements represent what the organization actually believes, not what it wishes it believed.
- Beliefs are not rationalizations of present or previous organizational behaviors.
- Beliefs are considered as constituting a foundation for decision-making and not as rigid policies.
- Beliefs are important because they set the entire philosophic and behavioral tone of the school system.
- Belief statements require no justification beyond, "We believe . . ."
- Beliefs serve as a yardstick against which all policies, practices, and operations are measured to insure consistency between practice and belief.

Alternative Strategies for Accomplishing Situation Analysis

- Collect and categorize existing data related to the education system. Categories of data might include among others, community, organization, staff, pupils, curriculum, facilities, and fiscal. Analyze the data to produce information for use in operations and decision-making.
- Solicit data from external groups, realizing that such data will likely assume varied configurations. Advice and recommendations from advisory bodies should be collected in a systematic manner

and entered into the information system. Community expectations for education might be solicited through public meetings, questionnaires, neighborhood meetings, and input from stratified random samples of the population which is being served by the system.

- Generating beliefs of the education system might have their genesis in the expectations and mores of the community. The identification of beliefs should provide opportunity for all personnel within the system to identify individual beliefs. After these have been collected, discussions may be held in each sub-system for developing a consensus relative to what the education system believes with regard to education. Fortified with results from such discussions, the education system is then ready to adopt a tentative list of beliefs for review, modification, and adoption.
- Designing a vehicle for feedback from personnel within the system would likely produce valuable data indicating strengths, weaknesses, and problem areas within the system.
- Examination and periodic review should be made of the information system (data plus analysis) to determine its usefulness, accuracy, and current validity. A review committee might be established to make recommendations concerning the information system.

SITUATION ANALYSIS	POSSIBLE POINTS OF DISCUSSION
I. **Community Characteristics, Educational Expectations, and Community Education Support** Prepare a brief narrative relating to the following points: a. Describe the community served by your education system. b. What kinds of education does your community want and is willing to support? c. What educational issues have been discussed in recent elections for members of the Board of Education? d. How does the local media regard education? e. What educational changes have been well received by the community? Poorly received? f. What groups, both internal and external, have affected the education system? g. What major changes in student population do you anticipate in the next five years, if any? h. Have you assessed community opinion of the education system within the last two years? If so, please attach the instrument used and the results attained.	• To what degree is the involvement of the community in the affairs of the education system adequate? • To what degree are the goals and objectives of the school understood and accepted by the community? • To what degree do mechanisms exist for encouraging community participation in making school policy?

SITUATION ANALYSIS	POSSIBLE POINTS OF DISCUSSION
II. **Student Data Requirements** Provide the following data for each of the previous five school years. a. Attendance data (Average Daily Attendance and Membership Retained, Suspensions, Drop-outs) b. Student achievement and ability data c. Number of students continuing formal education (and follow-up data on their performance, if available) d. Number of students gainfully employed following graduation or earlier discontinuation of schooling (and data on their performance, if available.) e. Number of students attending summer school: • To repeat courses • To take new work	• Are there any unstated policies evident in the attendance data? If so, indicate. • To what degree does data on student performance indicate progress toward the objectives of the school system? • To what degree is the data adequate for making decisions about the curriculum and student needs?

SITUATION ANALYSIS	POSSIBLE POINTS OF DISCUSSION
III. **Instructional Programs** a. Briefly describe your instructional program by: 1. Grade organization or equivalent structure 2. Curriculum (describe by program — language arts, social studies, health education, etc., and any other special activities) 3. Special and innovative programs 4. Teaching approaches used 5. Instructional media 6. Guidance program 7. Ability or other groupings used b. Briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional programs c. Describe recent changes in the instructional programs. How are curriculum changes originated and implemented?	• To what degree does the instructional program support the objectives of the education system? • How would you classify the learning environment in the schools? • To what degree is the instructional program adequately coordinated throughout the system? • To what degree are teachers receptive to change? • Who are the instructional leaders in the education system? • To what degree are appropriate in-service activities provided for personnel at all levels? • To what degree do teachers use behavioral objectives in their teaching?

SITUATION ANALYSIS	POSSIBLE POINTS OF DISCUSSION
IV. **Organization** Provide a current organizational chart for your education system.	• To what degree is there adequate coordination among students, teachers, and administrators? To what degree are they working together? • To what degree does everyone have a clear idea of what his role and functions are? • To what degree do the various levels of the system communicate freely with one another?

SITUATION ANALYSIS	POSSIBLE POINTS OF DISCUSSION
V. **Resources** 1. Staff a. Certification status of staff members. b. Other significant qualifications of staff members. 2. Physcial Facilities Briefly describe the major strengths and weaknesses of existing physical facilities. 3. Finances a. Provide the budget for the current fiscal year b. If the budget does not provide for the following, please include: 1. Separate dollar totals received from various federal, state, and local sources. 2. Total per pupil expenditure. c. What is your discretionary authority in the expenditure of the various monies received? 4. Other Resources a. What informational resources (e.g. — state agency consultants, educational laboratory materials, etc.) are available and used by your education system?	• Does the education system have any organized personnel system? If so, describe. • To what degree are the physical facilities adequate? • To what degree is the present level of funding adequate to meet needs? • How is the budget prepared? • To what degree is the education system able to identify how much it is spending on various programs? • To what degree are the present kinds and quality of informational resources available to the education system adequate?

Mission

Definition

The mission of an education system is a broad and comprehensive statement of the central and continuing purpose which justifies its continuing support by society and which provides direction for the management and allocation of resources for its operation.

Explanation

The focal point of all organizational behavior is the mission of the organization. The single statement of purpose is the organization's reason for being and its justification for consuming resources.

Historically, mission statements have long been a part of our culture. They have been cast into bronze, coined, as well as used as placques over doorways in famous buildings. The have served as mottos for military organization units as well as for family coat of arms. They have provided inspiration to religious organizations as well as fraternal organizations. They have been an emotional rallying point for social causes as well as for corporate causes. The mission serves the organization by giving it an easily recognizable, easily communicated identity.

In planning, special attention must be given to the mission of the organization, since this concentrated statement encompasses its broad purposes. Once the mission is clearly established, detailed objectives are more easily developed. Explicitly, the mission defines the scope of appropriate educational activities, and serves to guide the evolution of the development of other parts of the plan.

The mission, once accepted, assists all personnel of the organization in giving direction to their activities. The mission specifies the primary purpose toward which the resources of the organization should be directed. By serving as the focal point for organizational effort, the use of resources will be maximized. From this point of view, the mission statement serves as justification to all segments of society that support education.

The mission statement serves as a major factor in motivating personnel to achieve the objectives developed by the organization. By developing a commitment to the mission of the organization, many personnel and motivation problems can be minimized.

Characteristics

- A mission statement is simple, precise, and clear. No special knowledge of professional jargon should be required to understand its meaning, and all who read the mission should be able to understand the general purpose of the organization.
- A mission statement is brief, yet the major purpose and/or responsibility of the school system should be obvious to the reader.
- A mission statement is unique to the particular education enterprise. If two organizations share the same mission statement, they compete for resources and clients.
- A mission statement is capable of engendering commitment and enthusiasm from the clients of the organization as well as from personnel within the organization.
- A mission statement indicates desirable flexibility in terms of time.
- A mission statement defines the client group served by the education system.
- The statement, output oriented, emphasizes student performance or competency.
- The mission statement is understood by all personnel, internal and external, who have interest and responsibility for developing a productive education system.

Alternative Strategies for Developing a Mission Statement

- Data collected through communications with groups external to the education system will provide ideas and direction for the mission. External groups include all groups with which the education system has established communication linkages.
- Data resulting from discussion with personnel internal to the organization also will provide ideas and directions for the mission.
- Data resulting from communication channels established with students will assist in formulating the mission.
- All data should be collected and assembled which can be analyzed to produce the information needed for developing a tentative mission statement for the education system. With such information in hand, the planning/leadership team might then develop a tentative mission statement which has pertinent meaning.
- The tentative mission should be openly discussed by all personnel in the education system in order to secure feedback for possible revision/modification. This approach affords a consensus concerning the mission as well as potential for generating a personal commitment to the mission.

Continuing Objectives

Definition

Continuing objectives are qualitative statements which collectively describe the ideal conditions which would exist on a continuing basis when the education system is making progress toward its mission.

Explanation

The basic purpose of continuing objectives is to make the intent of the mission statement more explicit. Although the mission statement serves to focus attention on the activities of the organization, it is sufficiently general that additional clarification is needed before it can be effectively used in program development. Mission statements, no matter how clear, frequently use terms which need supporting definitions in order to make them useful to practitioners.

In addition to the intellectual linkage between the mission statement and the daily activities of the organization, continuing objectives serve as a mechanical linkage between the mission statement, specific objectives, and more precisely defined learning objectives. The argument above is applicable to the need for linkage between the broadly stated mission statement and tightly structured specific objectives and learning objectives. Experience has shown that it is difficult to relate specific objectives directly to the mission statement without intermediate steps.

Continuing objectives, like the mission statement, are idealistic and stated in terms of learning outcomes for students. Collectively, the continuing objectives identify the learning areas of an individual who has gone through the instructional program offered by the education system.

Continuing objectives actually break down the mission statement into definable parts which are more easily managed. They facilitate further development of the planning process by serving as an anchor for specific learning objectives and their corresponding strategies. Frequently, they are used as the foundation on which the organizational structure is built.

An important result of continuing objectives is that they assist in ensuring that the continual focus of evaluation remains on results rather than on strategies, programs, or processes. Although continuing objectives are frequently not measureable, they do, however, provide direction to the instructional and support operations of the total education system.

Characteristics

- Continuing objectives are idealistic and identify the broad learning outcomes for pupils.
- Continuing objectives are expressed in terms of results and identify the population from whom the results are expected.
- Continuing objectives do not contain an explicit or implicit completion date.
- Continuing objectives are consistent with the mission statement.
- Continuing objectives do not make any reference to the means that will be used to achieve the objectives.
- Continuing objectives specifically define the reason for which the education system exists.
- Continuing objectives are indicators for determining whether the education system is making progress toward its mission.
- The continuing objectives are limited in scope in order not to encompass a multitude of dissimilar functions.

Alternative Strategies for Developing Continuing Objectives

- The primary basis for the content (learning outcomes) of the continuing objectives can be found in data collected from the external and internal groups to the education system. Expectations of the community (lay, parent, pupil) for public education invariably is a valuable source for developing continuing objectives. Obviously, personnel in the organization should be solicited for data related to continuing objectives. Through such groups tentative lists of learning outcomes may be generated. This data should be assembled and from it the planning/leadership team might develop a tentative list of continuing objectives.
- This tentative list should be validated to determine their accuracy in reflecting community expectations for public education and to determine the accuracy of the perceptions of educational outcomes held by personnel within the organization. Without these validations for determining commonness of mission and objectives, conflict between the community and the educational organization might easily arise. Moreover, internal disagreement among personnel in the organization might readily result in conflict, fragmentation of the total learning endeavor, and competition among sub-systems for funds and for favor. Competition among sub-systems feasibly might

cause a reduction in the openness with which the organization moves to conduct its operations. In validating the continuing objectives, discussion should take place with external groups and within each sub-system of the total education system. Feedback should be used to modify the continuing objective until agreement has been reached.

- Continuing objectives may be developed by using some of the currently available instruments which might assist in generating the objectives for the education system. Variations might include completion of questionnaires, phone and/or onsite interviews, poll-taking instruments using random samples of populations, and other vehicles used to identify learning expectations. Whatever method(s) are used, the assemblying and analyzing of the data to identify the continuing objectives must be done. The planning/leadership team might play the key role in this task.

Assessment of Continuing Objectives

Definition

The assessment of continuing objectives includes an analysis of each objective in terms of current effort, programs, and level of performance in the education system.

Explanation

The planning process, to this point, has concentrated on efforts to determine the goals of the education system. The ultimate aim of planning is to improve student learning outcomes through a process of rational decision-making relative to the allocation of resources. Identification of continuing objectives, in and of itself, will not improve student learning outcomes. The improvement of student learning outcomes will result from the strategies/programs which are identified, selected, developed, and implemented later in the planning process. In this phase of the planning process additional data and its analysis will be needed for providing more specific information about current performance in the learning outcomes projected in the continuing objectives.

The assessment of each continuing objective (learning outcome) provides an indepth review and analysis of each learning outcome identified by the education system. The situation analysis done in the earlier phase of the planning process provides a broad overview of operations of the total education system, whereas, the assessment of continuing objectives is the specific examination and analysis of the current situation with regard to each learning outcome.

Characteristics

- An assessment of the continuing objectives (learning outcomes) identifies current pupil performance as related to each continuing objective.
- An assessment identifies the strategy(ies) (programs) currently in operation relating to each continuing objective. Description of strategies should include numbers and qualifications of personnel (instructional and support), materials, supplies, and equipment.
- An assessment identifies the current strengths, weaknesses, and problems relating to each continuing objective.
- An assessment identifies the fiscal resources allocated for the attainment of each continuing objective.

Alternative Strategies for Accomplishing the Assessment of the Continuing Objectives

- Organize an ad hoc committee around each continuing objective. Committee membership might consist primarily of teachers working the learning area and should represent K-12 with representation from each school. Resource and support personnel (learning/subject specialists, evaluation personnel, administrative personnel) should assist the committees to assess the learning area.
- Use external consultants to assist the ad hoc committees in assessing each continuing objective.
- Develop and correlate the State assessment approach with a locally designed and implemented assessment strategy/program, even though the process will require an extended period of time.
- Utilize external consultants to do the assessment for the local education system.

37 TEXT CONTINUES P. 36

Initial efforts in identifying strategies should encourage the unconstrained ideas and thoughts of the professional staff. Ideas for strategies (programs) should emphasize the teaching/learning processes and the variety of ways in which staff, pupils, materials, supplies, and equipment may be organized and through which productive interaction may take place. One basic element of planning is the identification of alternative strategies, since the absence of alternatives would eliminate the need for planning and decision-making. If there is only one strategy (program) through which students may learn, then no choice may be made relative to which strategy(ies) to select, develop, and implement.

When alternative strategies have been identified, the task then becomes one of evaluating the alternatives and selecting the most effective strategy(ies) for development and implementation. The rationale for evaluating and selecting strategies should be based on cooperatively devised criteria. Such criteria might include the following: (1) potential of the strategy to improve student learning; (2) compatibility with existing policies, rules, and regulations; (3) ability of staff to implement and use the strategy; (4) existence and/or development of instructional materials required in the strategy; (5) current operational strategy or proposed new strategy requiring development; (6) ease of implementation; (7) number of students affected by strategy; (8) acceptance of strategy by pupils, professional personnel, and lay personnel; (9) cost of implementing the strategy; and (10) the availability of funds for implementing the strategy. When each strategy has been evaluated, the staff may then select the strategy(ies) which will be developed and implemented for achieving the learning objectives. Again, strategy identification and selection should emphasize creativity and should be decided by those persons responsible for implementation. Personnel having the training, competence, and experience needed to identify teaching procedures, techniques, and practices for bringing about learning should make strategy decisions.

Strategies are of potential benefit to school personnel involved in preparing for the design and construction of new buildings or the major renovation of older facilities. Strategies, and the objectives they are to accomplish, should be the instructional foundation for formulating educational specifications. If new physical facilities are to be functional and supportive of the instructional program, then clearly-expressed, properly-conceived educational specifications are essential. Well-defined strategies and objectives, when available, are the source from which educational specifications may be drawn. For assistance in formulating educational specifications, refer to the publication, *The Development of Education Specifications*, developed by the Division of School Planning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

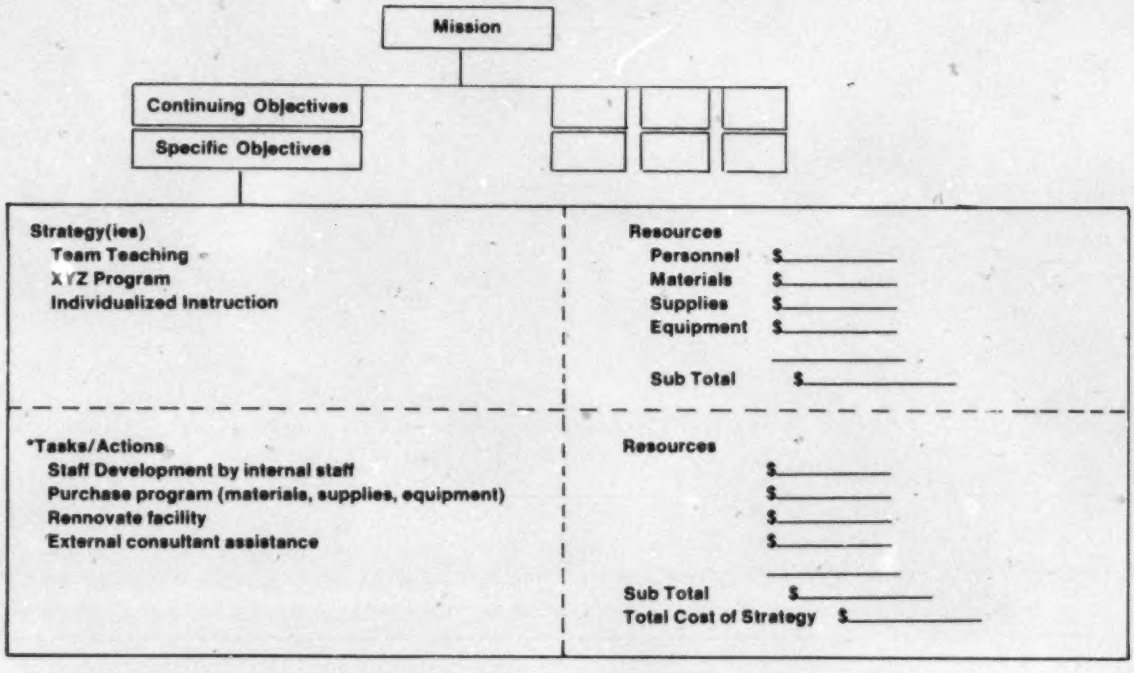
The format within which strategies are identified and developed will vary among education systems. One element common to any strategy format is that the format should generate flow into the budget-making processes. The strategy format should be such that related fiscal resource needs may be determined and expressed in a manner compatible with items included in the budget. Therefore, the basic items into which strategies should be converted are: personnel, instructional materials, supplies, and equipment. It follows then that each educational system must examine its budgeting process in order that strategies and budget items will dovetail.

With the identification and selection of strategies for implementation, the identification of a compatible budgeting format, and the allocation of resources, the task then becomes one of implementing the instructional strategy(ies) which have been selected. In order to implement the strategies effectively, a number of specific tasks should be performed by individuals in the educational system, who are directly involved in the teaching-learning process and by those persons who serve in a supportive role. For example, the implementation of a strategy(ies) might require:

- purchase of the program materials
- staff development (training) which will enable personnel to use the strategy/program
- renovation of facilities to accommodate the strategy
- public relations through which citizens are informed about the strategy
- consultant assistance during the implementation of the strategy.

The selected strategy(ies) and the manner in which it (they) can best be implemented will determine what tasks must be performed in order to make the strategy(ies) operational.

The following diagram illustrates further the importance of strategies as being the central focus of the education system's efforts.



*Note: The tasks/actions become one of the bases of support services plans in the education system.

Again, it should be emphasized that the above diagram is a simplified version of a complex process that can be used to identify select, develop, and implement strategies as well as to integrate budget-making with strategy implementation. Each education system of necessity, will need to modify the process to fit its specific needs.

Characteristics

- Instructional strategies are means to ends; they include the many ways in which staff, students, materials, supplies, and equipment are organized in a teaching-learning process.
- Instructional strategies identify the fiscal resources required to achieve an objective(s).
- Instructional strategies promote compatibility of learning styles among students with the instructional program.
- Instructional strategies promote the creativity of personnel in identifying, selecting and developing new approaches/programs designed to bring about a learning outcome.
- Instructional strategies are the most visible components of the education system in action.

Alternative Strategies for Identifying, Developing, and Implementing Instructional Strategies.

- Strategies should be developed at the school level. The planning/leadership team in each school — in conjunction with departments, teams, or some other component — should have the responsibility for making strategy decisions. Through training, experience, and otherwise, teaching personnel have the competence required to identify, select, develop, and implement teaching procedures, practices, and techniques that will most effectively bring about the desired learning outcomes for students. When agreed upon at the school level, strategies have the possibility of accommodating the learning styles of students and the competencies and strengths of teaching personnel.
- Strategy constraints which define boundaries within which strategies/programs are to be implemented may be established by the education system. These may vary from the use of a particular instructional/learning system on a system-wide basis in each school to a minimum of constraints which indicate, for example, that strategies must be legal, harmonious with community mores, successful in practice, and within fiscal resources. Constraints should define the freedom for developing and implementing strategies.
- Alternative strategies may be developed for achieving an objective(s). Creativity of personnel should be encouraged, for without alternative strategies there are no decisions to be made.

39 TEXT CONTINUES P. 51Ca

Specific Objectives (Instructional)

Definition

Specific objectives are quantitative and qualitative statements of desired student achievement and/or outcome which are essential to the achievement of continuing objectives and which identify the time of completion, results expected, and the means of evaluation.

Explanation

A key element in effective planning is the ability to conceptualize the desired outcomes of learning experiences. With the broad learning outcomes identified in continuing objectives, the specific objectives become more definitive and qualitative statements which identify the specific learnings and which give meaning to the continuing objectives. These outcomes generally form the basis for what is called a specific objective. Clearly stated objectives permit review and decisions regarding the propriety and value of the objectives themselves. It is possible for an elaborate strategy/program to be developed and implemented toward some vague end which, even if clearly stated, would not be worthy of even minimal effort. It is not until objectives are clearly stated that decisions can be made regarding the real value of objectives and the strategies that will be used for achieving the objectives.

Further, since decisions regarding the instructional program and the learning outcomes of children are made at several levels of administration in an educational system, it is suggested that specific objectives be developed at several levels. In a system-wide approach to education, the total organization establishes specific, community-wide objectives as pre-determined benchmarks of a student's learning experiences, K-12. These benchmarks may then provide the means whereby the system is able to determine the learning progress of students, determine the effectiveness of its programs, and isolate its instructional weaknesses, deficiencies, and problem areas.

Within the framework of the education system's specific objectives, each sub-system (school) should modify performance levels and otherwise alter its pattern of dealing with objectives in accordance with the needs of its particular student population. If benchmarks are used at the system level, each school will need to develop specific objectives for each of the grades assigned to that school. If specific objectives are developed at the system level for each grade level, modifications in performance likewise should be made at the school level. Each level in the hierarchy of objectives is a more definitive breakdown of the preceding level. The number of levels should be determined by the personnel in the subsystems (schools) of the total education system. The development of specific objectives should result in a learning continuum which identifies a sequential series of specific learning outcomes for each continuing objective (broad goal). Specific objectives should be compatible with any organization pattern and should promote varied strategies (instructional) which can be matched with the varied learning styles of students. It is essential, therefore, that specific objectives be clearly differentiated from the strategies (means) to be used for achieving the specific objectives.

Characteristics

- Specific objectives are consistent with the mission statement and with continuing objectives.
- Specific objectives clearly indicate measurable results.
- Specific objectives clearly indicate who will demonstrate the results.
- Specific objectives clearly indicate the *time* when evaluation will take place.
- Specific objectives clearly indicate the means of evaluation.
- Specific objectives do not make reference to anticipated means for pursuing objectives.

Alternative Strategies for Developing Specific Objectives (Instructional)

- Specific objectives at the system-wide level may be developed by the same ad hoc committees used in assessing each continuing objective in the previous step. Teaching personnel have the competencies and experience to identify the learning outcomes desired by the education system for its students. These committees should be supported with resource personnel in the learning area under consideration, as well as with evaluation personnel who can assist in determining current performance levels.
- A planning/leadership team in each sub-system (school) may be used to modify/adapt/build upon system-wide specific objectives for use in each school. The school planning/leadership team works through and with the departments/teams or through whatever internal organization is peculiar to the school for accomplishing the learning outcomes.

Priorities

Definition

Priorities are a rank ordering of the continuing objectives in terms of importance or a listing of the major gaps existing between current and desired performance.

Explanation

Given adequate resources for implementing all desired strategies/programs which might achieve the results stated in the objectives, there would be little need to establish priorities in order that the high ranking continuing objectives might be implemented first.

The priorities of continuing objectives may be identified in terms of importance in the judgment of personnel within the education system, the community served by the system, or through a combination of both. This approach provides a rapid but highly tentative and subjective listing of priorities. A second approach for identifying priorities is through an indepth data analysis which produces information indicating the current student performance in each continuing objective. The lowest performance or difference between current and desired/expected performance represents a gap which should be closed.

Any identification of priorities must be qualified. Even though a continuing objective is not identified as a top priority, there should be no implication that the objective will not receive a resource allocation. It simply means that more effort and more resources will be applied to other priorities selected by the education system. This additional effort might be in special projects, staff development, support services directed to priorities, or curriculum examination and modification.

It is natural and commendable that various groups in the community, (educators, laymen, pupils) will want to know the basis upon which priorities are developed. Consequently, whatever technique is used to arrive at the priority ranking of the continuing objectives, the rationale should be carefully documented and communicated to all appropriate groups, internally and externally.

Characteristics

- Priorities reflect the views of the various groups, internal and external to the organization.
- Priorities are consistent with identified weaknesses/needs of the education system.
- Priorities will emphasize points at which additional efforts in terms of resources and support services are most needed.

Alternative Strategies for Identifying Priorities

- Lay and professional groups may assist in the determination of priorities by indicating through such vehicles as questionnaires, hearings, meetings, and surveys the rank order of continuing objectives which they feel are most important.
- An objective approach to the setting of priorities may be facilitated through a system of evaluation which provides for collecting and analyzing student performance.
- Collection and analysis may be done by evaluation personnel within the system when they are available. External consultants may be utilized for accomplishing the analysis and/or for developing needed competence within the system.
- Data collection and analysis should become a part of the total information system developed by each local education system.

Strategies (Instructional)

Definition

Strategies are the means employed to achieve objectives.

Explanation

The identification, selection, development, and implementation of strategies is the most creative aspect of planning. In essence, strategies are the various programs, both instructional and support, selected to accomplish objectives. They comprise the visible components of the education system in action. In essence, strategies are the approaches which personnel, materials, supplies, and equipment are assembled and used for providing a teaching/learning environment in which students can achieve learning objectives. TEXT CONTINUES P. 37

- Strategies should result in the identification of fiscal resource requirements in terms of personnel, materials, supplies, and equipment. Budget personnel should assist in designing the manner in which strategies are displayed to ensure compatibility with budgeting processes.
- New ideas should be encouraged in developing strategies. Sources for ideas might be teaching personnel, support personnel, external consultants, as well as individuals from the Department of Public Education, colleges, and universities, or any combination of these.

Support Services Plans

Definition

The support services plan is the expression of the goals, objectives, and strategies of a support area in the education system.

Explanation

Reviewing the planning efforts and outcomes to this point would reveal a written plan consisting of the following components:

- Information relevant to an understanding of the local education system and the community collected and analyzed — *Situation Analysis.*
- Statements of belief which are widely accepted within the education system and which are used to guide its behavior — *Beliefs.*
- A broad and comprehensive statement of the central and continuing purpose of the education system — *Mission.*
- A listing of the broad goals which collectively describe the conditions that will exist on a continuing basis when the education system is accomplishing its mission — *Continuing Objectives.*
- A goal-by-goal analysis of the current level of performance — *Assessment of Continuing Objectives.*
- Statements of desired student achievement which identify the time of accomplishment, results expected, and means of evaluation, — *Specific Objectives (Instructional.)*
- Rank-ordering of continuing objectives — *Priorities.*
- Means to be employed to accomplish the specific objectives — *Strategies.*

If the plan were now complete without reference to specific objectives and strategies for support services, such services and personnel not directly involved in the teaching-learning situation would be unrecognized; and this would be a totally untenable situation. Support personnel and services are essential, therefore, for the maximum utilization of all resources toward the attainment of maximum productiveness.

Support services should be recognized as a necessary part of any education system in achieving its mission. They include services such as maintenance; school food services; transportation; as well as the acquisition of purchasing materials, supplies, and equipment; fiscal accounting; staff development services; personnel services; media support; and instructional support. As defined here, support services includes all personnel and services provided which are not directly interacting in the teaching-learning process. This in no way minimizes support services but recognizes them as essential to the teaching-learning process. For example, without transportation there would be few students in schools; without maintenance, school facilities would deteriorate. It is assumed that all components of the total education system are significant and that their coordination and utilization should be guaranteed.

Consequently, each support area in an education system should formulate its own support service plan consisting of:

- A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE of the over-riding and ongoing purpose of the support area which justifies its existence in the education system and which provides direction for its operation and for the allocation of resources.

- BROAD GOAL STATEMENTS which describe the general condition which will exist on a continuing basis when the support area is fulfilling its purpose. These broad goal statements should provide orientation and direction for accomplishing the main responsibilities of the support area.
- SUPPORT OBJECTIVES describing specific results or outcomes on the part of the client of the support area which are essential to the accomplishment of a broad goal; which are to be achieved by a specific time, by specific individuals, and the results of which are measurable.
- SUPPORT STRATEGIES describing the means for achieving the support objectives.
- RESOURCE NEEDS IDENTIFICATION which suggests the resources (listing the people and things) needed to implement the support strategies.
- BUDGET, or the financial expression of the support objectives and strategies.
- EVALUATION SCHEME, or a description of the processes through which the results are measured and compared with predetermined standards described in the support objectives. The evaluation scheme should be conceived as a continuous process which provides for a means of analyzing and interpreting the validity of the support strategies as well as an opportunity for revising the support area plan, as needed.

Characteristics

- Support services plans identify the support services which are needed for carrying out the mission of the local education system.
- Support services plans contain objectives for ongoing services and for new strategies to be implemented in the education system.
- Support services plans describe duties and responsibilities of support service personnel.
- Support services plans identify resources needed to provide the support services to the education system.

Alternative Strategies for Developing Support Services Plans

Each support service area should develop a plan with previously identified components. This can best be done by the personnel responsible for the particular service being provided. Planning time should be set aside in which to develop the plans. Appropriate instructional personnel will be able to assist in assuring that instructional needs are addressed. Support service plans should address the ongoing operations for which a particular service exists. In addition, new services required to enable the instructional strategies to function must become a part of the support services plans. For example, a team teaching strategy being implemented in a particular school might require: renovation of existing facilities, a maintenance department objective; specific staff training, a component of the plan for staff developement; consultant assistance in implementation, a central office staff responsibility; supervisory assistance, a function of the principal; specific financial resources, the administrator of the budget; and employment of aides for assisting the team, the personnel department and other decision-makers within the system.

Budget

Definition

The budget is the financial expression of the education system's strategies (instructional and support) for achieving its stated objectives.

Explanation

The budget is the financial expression of the school system's objectives and the strategies or programs. It identifies the financial resources required to achieve the school system's objectives. The development of a budget on the basis of objectives and strategies is a rational approach to defining fiscal resource requirements for the educational system and initiates a move toward a program-budgeting approach. Consideration of budget-making in terms of objectives is a challenging approach for determining the fiscal resources required for accomplishing desired learning outcomes. Although the task is complex, the effort of coordinating fiscal requirements and purpose is one that should be undertaken. Without this vital interrelationship, budget-making will remain on an incremental basis in which monies are added to existing funds.

Characteristics

- Fiscal resource requirements are identified in terms of the objectives to be achieved.
- Budget documents indicate funding sources.
- Budget documents indicate costs by level of education and according to strategy/program areas.

Alternative Strategies for Developing Budget

- The business office and key instructional and support personnel will need to work together to develop a budget format which is compatible existing programs within the local school system.
- The program budget format along with budget preparation directions should be provided to those personnel responsible for various sub-programs. Budgets from sub-programs can then be aggregated to provide an overall budget document.
- *Financial Accounting, Handbook II, Revised,* which was compiled and edited by the U. S. Office of Education should serve as a helpful resource for identifying a program-budgeting structure.

Evaluation

Definition

The evaluation component of a plan is a description of the detailed and systematic process for obtaining and analyzing meaningful data that produces information which identifies the degree to which an education system is accomplishing its objectives.

Explanation

The evaluation component of a plan describes the process and procedures which the education system plans to use in determining the accomplishment of its objectives and the effectiveness of its programs. The information produced through the evaluation process should be useful in deciding whether to improve, maintain, or discontinue strategies/programs which the education system has developed and implemented.

Since evaluation, a complex and difficult task, is one of the most important activities contributing to improved learning, the development of an effective evaluation system is essential for making decisions which have the potential for improving student learning.

Many types of evaluation take place in an education system. Some evaluations are informal and rest primarily on intuitive judgments, while others are more formalized and systematic. Some evaluations focus on the learning outcomes of instructional programs; whereas others assess the adequacy of support area services and programs. Though all these types of evaluation are useful, the following explanation will focus primarily on a discussion of the formal and systematic evaluation of student learning.

Although the existence of goals and objectives and the selection of appropriate measuring instruments are part of a total evaluation effort, there is indeed more. The term evaluation connotes that the value or worth of something has or will be determined. Evaluation involves measurement, the collection and analysis of data, and a judgment concerning the effectiveness of a strategy/program. For example, a school's third grade reading program may have been evaluated at the end of the year. If a mean percentile rank of 47 was achieved on some standardized test, was the program effective? Obviously, an evaluator could not judge the effectiveness of the third grade reading program on the basis of such limited information. Before making judgments concerning the worth of the program, the evaluator would need to know, among other things, the status of the students in terms of their aptitude and

reading achievement prior to entering the third grade. It is also essential that evaluation data be interpreted in terms of the characteristics of the students being evaluated. Unless this occurs, evaluation data often will not yield definitive information which is useful in decision-making.

Decision-makers at many levels within an education system require evaluation information in order to arrive at effective decisions. The local board of education may use system-wide evaluation information in the types of decisions it makes. This same information might not be particularly useful to a principal within the same system, since he could not assume that system-wide evaluation data accurately reflected the performance of the students in his school. To make effective decisions, the principal would need evaluation information related specifically to the school in which he is serving.

Classroom teachers also need specific types of evaluation information for decision-making. Information concerning student performance at the system level, for example, will not provide the teacher with specific information concerning the strengths and weaknesses of individual students.

The usefulness of an evaluation system is greatly enhanced if it is designed to permit evaluation data to be aggregated from the individual student level to the classroom, grade, benchmark, school, and system level. A system designed to facilitate this type of aggregation permits the compiling of summary evaluation reports at various levels, thereby assisting decision-makers from the classroom teacher to the board of education.

In measuring educational outcomes, two major types of test instruments are widely used. Test items in well constructed norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests are both keyed to educational objectives. Both norm and criterion referenced tests are useful in assessing student achievement; however, the two types of tests lend themselves to different types of interpretation.

The norm-referenced or standardized test generally deals with broader content areas than does the criterion-referenced test, and scores obtained from standardized tests are interpreted in relation to scores obtained by the group on which the test was normed. Norm-referenced tests are useful in comparing how well an individual or group is performing in relation to the norm group. Since major test publishers usually attempt to draw a nationally representative sample for norming their tests, the national norms provide a basis for comparing an individual or group test score to the scores achieved by students throughout the country.

Criterion-referenced tests are generally narrower in scope and have more test items for a given content area. Locally developed criterion-referenced tests are usually designed specifically to measure the achievement of particular program objectives. This type of test is used to determine an individual's status or the status of a group with respect to a particular criterion. A test criterion is an arbitrarily determined level of performance on a given test. The criterion might be expressed in terms of the percent of items correct or in terms of some other expected level of performance. Criterion-referenced tests have potential advantages over standardized tests in that they may be constructed so that test items are closely related to a school system's instructional objectives. Test scores from such tests are useful in identifying which instructional objectives have been mastered and which need additional emphasis.

Characteristics

- An effective evaluation system is keyed to the goals and objectives of an organization and provides information concerning the status of programs in terms of the results they are producing.
- The primary purpose of an evaluation system is to provide information which will assist decision-makers in arriving at better decisions.
- A thoughtfully developed evaluation system permits evaluative data to be aggregated from the student level through the system level, thereby providing all decision-makers with the information they require.
- A meaningful evaluation system contains procedures for projecting expected achievement according to the ability and background of the students.

Alternative Strategies for Developing an Evaluation System

- Education systems may choose to develop their own evaluation systems. If this approach is used, the local education agency would need a staff of sufficient size and technical expertise to accomplish this difficult task.
- An education system may choose to obtain outside consultants for developing part or all of its evaluation system. Outside consultants may be obtained from colleges and universities, private consulting firms, and the State Department of Public Instruction. Many of the major test publishers also retain evaluation consultants who will provide services without charge. It should be remembered, of course, that consultants from publishing firms are interested in selling their products.

Implementation

The benefits of comprehensive planning can be achieved only when there is implementation of the plan. It becomes necessary, therefore, that a detailed strategy for implementing the plan be devised — and continually modified as circumstances suggest.

Procedures for implementing new plans, no matter how meritorious, are almost certain to generate controversy. Even so, controversy of this nature has the potential for clearing the air, as it were, and producing a genuine awareness for the need to get the job done. It is possible, and highly probable, that insights, perspectives, attitudes, and values will be altered as understanding increases.

Successful implementation requires widespread involvement and interaction in the process of developing plans as well as full communication in order to avoid or minimize public and staff misunderstandings and resistance. In addition, effective implementation requires a basic commitment of human and economic resources. Likewise, productive implementation will likely require extensive reorientation or retraining of teachers and other staff members.

When the planning process is approached openly and sincerely and when care has been taken to ensure appropriate involvement, interaction, and commitment at all levels, then it is likely that implementation, as a major concept for improving the total education program, may be regarded as mandatory for continuing progress.

It is recommended that an implementation schedule, clearly defining roles and expectations, be developed for distribution to all staff members. One of the most convenient and productive techniques for developing such a schedule is for the person responsible for a particular strategy to devise a plan of action for that strategy. An action plan is simply a listing of the activities that must be carried out in order to implement the strategies. Action plans for each sub-system may then be compiled into a master implementation schedule for the total education system. Action plans, it is urged, should be monitored in order to determine progress in implementing the strategies identified. An additional value inherent in action plans is that they may be used in identifying responsibilities of personnel in the system.

Glossary

GLOSSARY

ANALYSIS — Analysis is the process of applying values and meaning to data in order to produce information.

ASSESSMENT — A description of the current status of a topic under consideration.

BELIEFS — Statements of principles or philosophy about education which are widely accepted by personnel within the education system and which guide the behavior of the personnel in the system.

BUDGET — A budget is the financial expression of the education system's strategies (instructional and support) for achieving its stated objectives.

EVALUATION — The evaluation component of a plan is a detailed and systematic process for obtaining and analyzing meaningful data that produces information which identifies the degree to which an education system is accomplishing its objectives.

MISSION — The mission is a broad and comprehensive statement of the central and continuing purpose of the education system which justifies its continuing support by society, and which provides direction for the management and allocation of resources for its operation.

NEED — A need is a deficiency or problem which, when identified through an assessment procedure, requires appropriate attention and action.

OBJECTIVE, Continuing — Continuing Objectives are qualitative statements which collectively describe the ideal conditions which would exist on a continuing basis when the education system is making progress toward its mission.

OBJECTIVE, Specific — Specific Objectives are quantitative and qualitative statements of desired student achievement and/or outcomes essential to the achievement of continuing objectives and which identify time of completion, results expected, and the means of evaluation.

OBJECTIVE, Instructional — An objective applied to instructional outcomes for students or groups of students.

OBJECTIVE, Support — A specific objective applied to a support service outcome needed in the instruction area for achieving desirable educational outcomes for student.

PLANNING — Planning is the rational determination of where the education system is, where it wants to go, and how it will get there. It is the process through which objectives are established and resources are allocated to optimize the attainment of those objectives on a predetermined schedule.

PRIORITIES — Priorities is a rank ordering of the continuing objectives in terms of importance or an indication of where the largest gaps exist between current and desired performance.

RESOURCES — Money, people, facilities, time, materials, or anything else used by the education system for accomplishing its objectives.

STRATEGIES — Strategies are the means employed to achieve objectives.

STRENGTHS — Strengths are characteristics as well as tangible or intangible assets which provide a definite advantage to the education system in carrying out its mission.

SUPPORT SERVICES PLANS — The support services plan is an expression of the goals, objectives, and strategies of a support area in the education system.

TASKS — Tasks are elements of a strategy which, when completed in sequential order, fulfill the intent of the strategy.

WEAKNESSES — Weaknesses are characteristics or deficiencies which impair the ability of the education system to carry out its mission.